

Bowser Retires After Three Decades in Public Safety

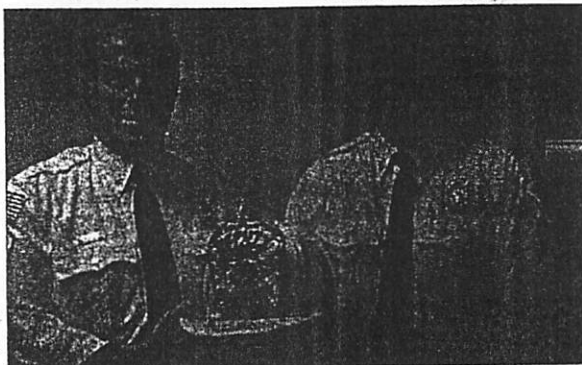
By MORAG MACLACHLAN

Duxbury Fire Deputy Chief John Bowser worked 32 years for the department and never took a sick day.

"It was not that I was never sick," Bowser said. "If I wasn't feeling well, I would use a vacation day. That's because if I didn't use my sick time, I got an extra week's pay at the end of the year. I wanted the money."

And Bowser also wanted to

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Deputy Chief John Bowser displays a helmet with a hand-painted shield Chief Kevin Nord presented him honoring his retirement from the department.

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assist the citizens of Duxbury. Before working for the fire department, Bowser worked for the police department for six years. He said he made the switch because his wife didn't like the hours and because he wanted a change of pace.

"I wanted to help people," he said.

Originally from the North Shore, Bowser moved to town in 1966 after marrying a "Duxbury girl who wasn't moving." He started at the fire department as a firefighter/EMT. The Elm Street resident then worked his way up to lieutenant and later fire prevention officer. He was about to retire, when he was offered the promotion to deputy.

"I liked the schedule," Bowser said. "It gave me the opportunity to work on my days off."

Bowser currently runs his own locksmith business in addition to serving with the department. He joked that this was a natural career progression since being a firefighter allows him "to break into people's homes." Bowser took a course on locksmithing and his business has grown by word of mouth. Bowser has even had to help fellow firefighters caught in a jam.

"He's bailed me out before when I've locked my keys in," Fire Chief Kevin

Nord said. "He's a jack of all trades. A can do guy, very sincere, honest and reliable."

Bowser is also modest. He didn't want the celebration thrown in his honor at the station on Tremont Street last Friday. During the party, Nord presented Bowser with a ceremonial helmet featuring a hand-painted shield by artist Bob Stella of Weymouth.

While holding this helmet, Bowser reflected on what event in his career had been the most memorable. It wasn't any of the countless number of fires he had responded to. Instead, it was the two medicals he went on that ended with him delivering babies.

"Anytime a child is hurt, it sticks out, but the two babies I delivered are most memorable. I enjoy being an EMT because I can help people. About 80 percent of our runs are medical. I like to think that's because I did such a good job as fire prevention officer," Bowser joked.

Bowser said he will also miss not being alert 24 hours a day, seven days a week to respond to a scene at a moment's notice. His last day is April 28. Bowser will then split his time between his locksmith business, police details and relaxing in Florida for three months of the year.